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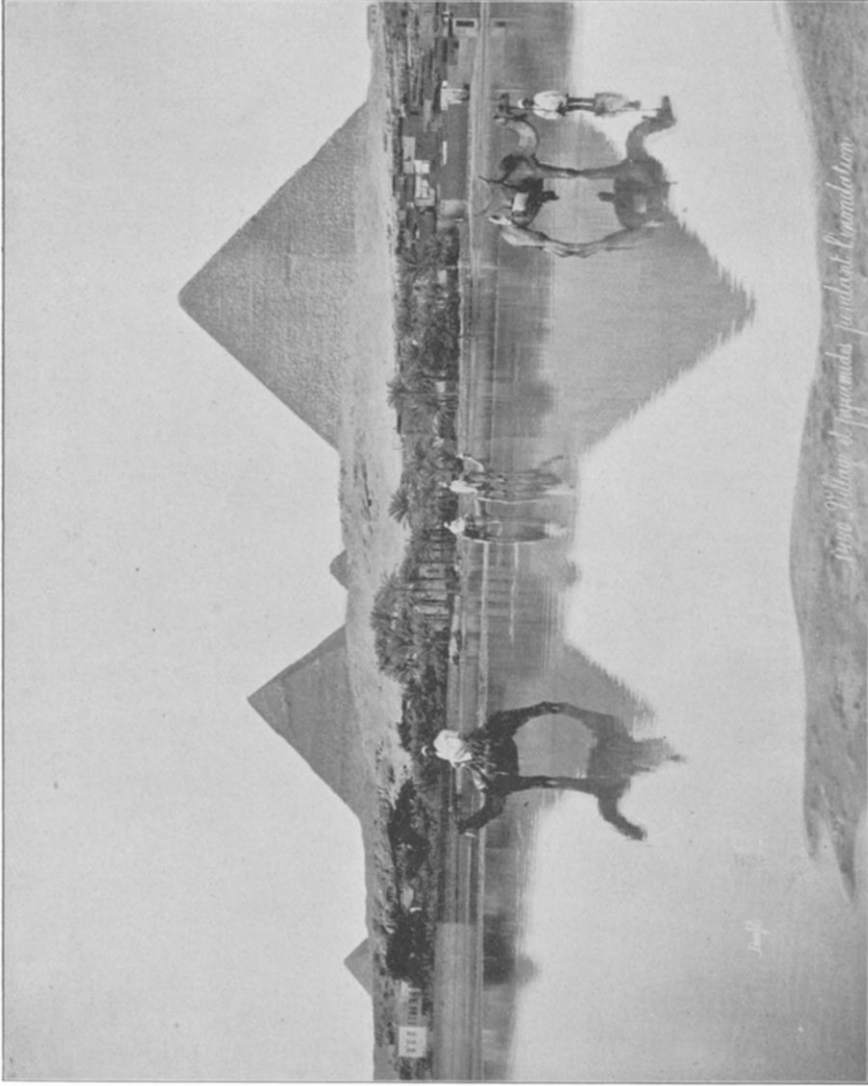
EARLY PALESTINE.

By the REVEREND WILLIAM HAYES WARD, D.D., LL.D.
New York City.

Evidence uncertain and indirect.—Babylonian influences predominant in earliest Palestine.—The primitive Semitic empire of Haran—Its conquest of non-Semitic Palestine.—Egyptian influence follows.—A Hittite invasion.—Light from the Amarna tablets.—The Exodus.

THE natural features of Palestine are fixed by ancient geological causes, and unlike those of Egypt and Assyria have not been much affected by alluvial deposition. The erosion of the mountain streams or of the little Jordan River is not a consideration important enough to be observed, except in minute topographical researches. The hills and highlands and valleys, and especially the great depression of the Jordan valley are substantially what they have been ever since the settlement of the earliest tribes. What we have to consider is, the people of Palestine in that period which a little while ago we should have called prehistoric; their power, their government, and their civilization.

Of course the evidence on which we must depend is in large part imperfect and the conclusions uncertain. On the surface of the soil we find here and there rude dolmens, such as are found all the way from India to Britain, and which are the memorials



THE PYRAMIDS OF GIZEH AND THE VILLAGE OF KAFRA DURING THE INUNDATION

From a photograph by Bouffis

See page 443

we are not certain of how many races. They tell us little more than that Palestine had part in the same early barbarism that covered all Southern Europe and Western Asia.

Somewhat more instructive ought to be the contents of the mounds which mark the site of the ancient cities of Palestine; but it is very remarkable that very little investigation has yet been made of these old tels, not enough yet at Tel el-Hesi, said to be the ancient Lachish, or at Jericho, to do more than open the subject in a hopeful way. We know from the nature of the pottery and especially from the lucky discovery of an inscribed tablet, that these mounds go back to an antiquity nearly fifteen hundred years before Christ; but how much further we do not yet know. The field for exploration is a considerable one, and of the greatest interest; and our conclusions, except as we may be so fortunate as to obtain other written records, will have to be reached chiefly by comparison with the pottery and other remains of early Phœnician and "Mycenian" periods.

In the absence, with the exception of the one el-Hesi tablet, of literary monuments found on the ground, we are dependent for historical information on the records of Egypt and Babylonia, and the Old Testament. Inasmuch as the date of the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Judges is in question, with the consensus of scholars tending to a period some centuries later than the events they describe, however trustworthy these books and the documents on which they are based may be, it is not our present duty to repeat their familiar data, but rather to gather the information directly given by, or inferred from, the Egyptian and Babylonian monumental records.

So far as we know, Egypt, near as it was, had no relations with Palestine before the time of the XVIIIth dynasty, when, about 1550 B.C., Thothmes I led an army through Palestine and Syria on his way to Mesopotamia. Up to this time, so far as we know, the suzerainty of Palestine, with that of the whole Phœnician coast, had been in Babylon. In the earliest period we cannot distinguish Canaan from the rest of Syrian country. It is probable that from the beginning of the predominant power which had begun, in the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, to develop



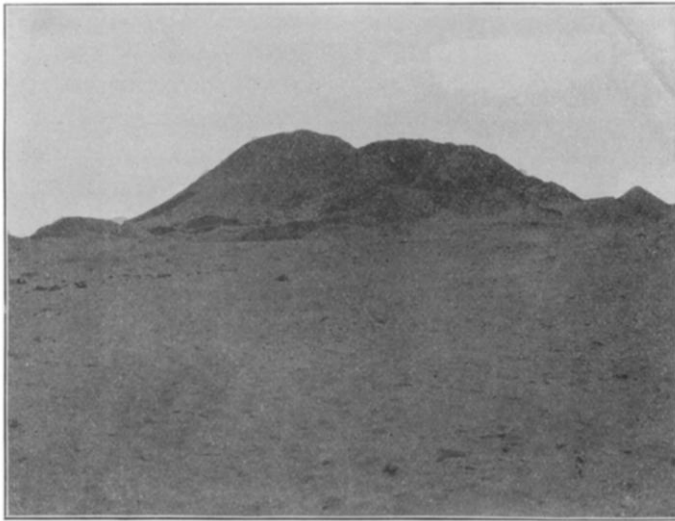
THE JORDAN

From a photograph by Bonfils

a civilization superior to any other, the necessities of trade had established Babylonian control as far as Cyprus, the seat of the copper mines. At any rate a seal found in Cyprus, bearing the name of Naram-Sin, a Babylonian king of nearly 3800 B.C., with other seals of a like antiquity and character, seems to indicate that Babylon ruled Cyprus at the very beginning of history. But Naram-Sin's father, Sargon I, led an army clear to the Mediterranean Sea; and the dominion of Babylonia over the Phœnician coast, Syria, and the Lebanon, seems to have begun at this time nearly 4000 years before Christ, and to have continued, with the capital of the empire removed now to Nineveh and now to Susa, down to the time of the Empire of Alexander, if we may except the comparatively brief periods when Egypt was in the ascendancy. The leading king of Babylonia repeated the expedition of Sargon I to the Mediterranean. Gudea, not far from 3000 B.C., bought timber for his temple from Lebanon; and we are especially interested to learn that he called the country *Amurru*, formerly read *Aharu*. This is also an Egyptian name of Syria, or the Lebanon, and is probably identical with the name *Amorites* of the Bible. From the location of Amurru west of Babylonia the word *amurru* came to mean *west*. The Amorites probably occupied this mountain region at this early period, and spread we know not how far over the neighboring highlands of Palestine. Nearly 1000 years later, or more, in the time of Abraham, the great Hammurabi, about 2250 B.C., in an inscription as yet unpublished, mentioned by Jensen, is spoken of as "king of Martu," which is the same as Amurru, or the western Syrian coast. This Hammurabi was probably the Amraphel, king of Shinar, who was associated with Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, Arioch, king of Ellasar, and Tidal, king of Nations (a misreading) in the attempt to quell a rebellion in the lower Jordan valley, as told in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. The names of all these four kings have now been found on Babylonian monuments, two of them, Chedorlaomer and Tidal, within the last year.

The second part, just issued, of Professor H. V. Hilprecht's volume on the explorations of the University of Pennsylvania at

Niffer, opens a far earlier vista into the history of the East. The inscriptions published by him which antedate the time of the Babylonian Sargon, carry us back, in his view, to a period from 4000 to 5000 B.C. What is important for our subject is the probability that the early Sumerian population of Southern Babylonia was conquered during that chiliad by a Semitic invasion from the North, which had its seat, as Hilprecht believes, at Harran, the stopping-place of Abraham on



MUD BRICK PYRAMID OF USERTESEN III AT DASHUR

See page 446

From a photograph by Brugsch

his way from Ur to Palestine. But if a dynasty at Harran could conquer Babylonia, it could just as easily have gone the other way and conquered the Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine—so strong a power could have done nothing else; and this would explain how Sargon I, 3800 B.C., inheriting the power and authority of the northern conqueror, would naturally have claimed and maintained his suzerainty of the Mediterranean coast and Cyprus. We may then probably consider that the Semitic conquest of Palestine began more than 4000 years B.C. and was

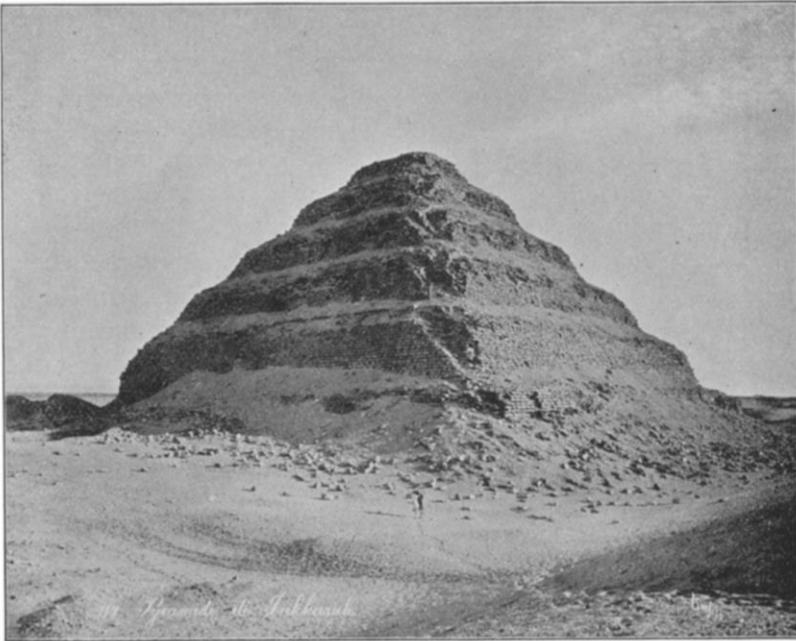
continued in the long rule and religious and literary influence of Babylonia.

Such records as these explain how it is that the Babylonian system of writing, and the Babylonian government prevailed, with interruption in Palestine for many centuries before the rise of the mighty XVIIIth dynasty of Egypt. Even the invasions of Thothmes and Rameses, and the establishment of Egyptian garrisons did not succeed in destroying the prevalent Babylonian civilization. The language was Semitic, fitted to the Semitic cuneiform writing, and not adjusted to the hieroglyphs of Egypt. Similarly the religion and the culture were those of the Euphrates and not the Nile. Practically one language was spoken in Palestine, Syria, Naharina, Assyria, and Babylonia. Egypt could not assimilate the country with her garrisons or her hieroglyphics. We do not know how long Canaan had been Semitic in language and probably in race. If Genesis 10 calls Canaan the brother of Mizraim or Egypt, that rather means that at the time when the table was composed the memory was of the Egyptian rule over Palestine during the XVIIIth or XIXth dynasties. We know from the Amarna tablets that the language of Palestine just before the Israelite occupation was Semitic, although we do not know whether the more ancient tribes mentioned in the Pentateuch, Horites, Zuzim, Zamzummim, Rephaim, etc., and perhaps Amorites, may not have been Mongolians. The Philistines who entered Palestine not far from the same time as the Israelites, were probably not Semites—perhaps of a race allied to the early Greek races.

Thus we may look upon the earliest inhabitants of Palestine as of a non-Semitic stock, doubtless shepherds, who were subdued by a Semitic type represented by the Canaanites, but probably not the more northern Amorites of the mountains. Among these Canaanite Semites came the Semites of Babylonia, with their higher civilization, their organized armies, and their system of writing. They established military and trading posts and gave the people religion and civilization. Cities sprang up with their trade, and even their literature, for we know that one city was called Kirjath-Sepher, or more correctly, Kirjath-Sopher,

City of the Scribe, if we may correct the vowel from the Septuagint, and from what seems to have been its Egyptian name, Beit-sopher, House of the Scribe.

From the time of Thothmes I till the end of the XIXth dynasty, the Babylonian civilization of Palestine was modified and enriched by that of Egypt. It would appear that it was the



THE PYRAMID OF ZOSER (THIRD DYNASTY) AT SAKKARA

The oldest identified pyramid in Egypt (see page 441)

From a photograph by Bonfils

expulsion of the hated Hyksos which encouraged Thothmes and his successors to the revenge of invading Asia. The Hyksos probably were Mongolians; very likely, as Billerbeck supposes, the furthest wave of that great Mongolian flood which gave to Babylonia the Elamite dynasty to which Chedorlaomer belonged. But by the time Thothmes entered Palestine, the Elamites, by whatever name they were there called, Rephaim, Zuzim, but hardly Amorite, were pretty much absorbed and assim-

lated with the great body of Semite Canaanites. The Egyptian conquests reached to the Euphrates, and its results are seen in the mythologic art of Assyrians, Hittites, Syrians, and Phœnicians, as well as in Palestine. The Egyptians called Palestine Haru, and the people of the region generally Rutennu. The names of many places are found in Egyptian records of the campaigns, the identification of which is not always easy; but among them may be mentioned Carmel, Megiddo, Taanach, Joppa, Aphek, Gezer, Edrei, and Ashtaroth (Karnaim). But the most extraordinary names, which have excited much discussion, are, as they are probably to be transliterated, Jacob-el and Joseph-el. It is likely that the names Jacob and Joseph originally had the name of some deity attached, such as El or Yahve, but these are names of cities, not of patriarchs.

It was about 1400 B.C., as we learn by comparing the monuments of Thothmes IV, grandson of the great conqueror Thothmes III, with the letters sent from Palestine and Phœnicia to Amenophis III, that the Hittites, probably representing another Mongolian movement, invaded Palestine. But this was the farthest extent of their advance, and they soon retreated, although their memory survived, with some colonies, perhaps, to give their names to soldiers of David and perhaps in the wife of Uriah, to supply a Hittite ancestress to our Lord, as Ruth had supplied a Moabite ancestress. The Hittites of the time of Abraham are not so easily explained.

These Amarna tablets, with their letters from Palestinian and Phœnician governors of fortified ports to Amenophis III shed a marvelous light on the condition of things in Palestine just previous to the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Not only are numerous towns mentioned, including Jerusalem with its king, but what is most important is the fact that we have it proved by these letters that the cuneiform writing of Babylon was the current medium of intercourse, and not the Egyptian, so complete had been the assimilation of the people to their rulers for more than 2000 years. It is clear that Palestine was no rude land, but a land of culture and literature and history, all going back to Babylonia, and therefore looking to the lower Euphrates

for its Eden. These letters are not yet fully investigated, but it does not seem possible that the Habiri mentioned can be Hebrews, as some have asserted, nor is it probable that the Yaudu are allied to Judah. This was a century or more before

the Exodus, although it is not impossible that when Jacob went into Egypt, according to Genesis, others of his tribe were left behind.

A discovery of great importance for our subject has just been announced, that of the mention of the Israelites in an inscription of Merenptah. As I write, Professor Petrie's brief account of his discovery and discussion of its bearing in *The Contemporary Review* for May is just at hand, and all that can now be said is that about 1200 B.C., Merenptah found Is-



THE PYRAMID OF UNAS (FIFTH DYNASTY)

From the North, showing descending passage and loose construction of core masonry

See page 443

From a photograph by Brugsch

raelites in Palestine, and claims what is likely enough, a victory over them. This is the first mention of the Israelites found in the Egyptian monuments, for it is far from probable that the Hebrews are meant by the earlier mention of a servile tribe called Aperiu. This discovery throws more darkness than light on the date of the exodus, and raises the new question whether a branch of the Israelite people did not remain in Palestine during the oppres-

sion. A second inscription of Merenptah, mentioning the Israelites, is announced by Dr. Spiegelberg, but probably adds nothing new.

The exodus, it would seem, must have taken place somewhere about 1200 B.C., a period of Egyptian decline. After Merenptah we have no account of serious Egyptian invasions until the times of the Jewish kings. No more do we have any account of Babylonian invasions. At this time the Assyrian power was rising, and the power of the Mitanni and of Naharina was strong, whose records are not yet discovered. We are now shut up for information to the Old Testament, whose account of the rise and power of the Philistines in Palestine, and of the conquest of Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia (Naharina), and of the disturbed state of Palestine during the time of the Judges is too familiar to need comment.